

# **The approach**

*Triples: Harry Dodge, Evan Holloway, Peter Shelton*

26th May - 3rd July 2016



*Triples: Harry Dodge, Evan Holloway, Peter Shelton*  
The approach, London  
Installation View



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*Emergency Weapons*  
Harry Dodge, 2003



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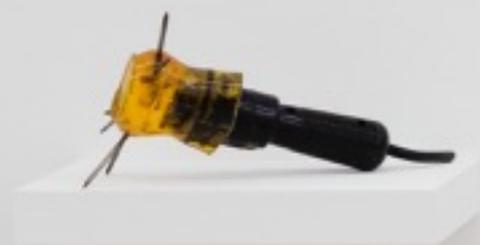
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CRITIC'S GUIDE - 15 JUN 2016

# Critic's Guide: London

BY IZABELLA SCOTT

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## 'Triples: Harry Dodge, Evan Holloway, Peter Shelton'

### The Approach

28 May - 3 July

'Triples' brings together three LA sculptors whose objects are linked by their relationship to the body. Peter Shelton shows a single work, *Ironlongbag* (1988), a voluptuous cast iron sack suspended from the ceiling like a piece of meat. Body-sized, it recalls the softness of flesh without ever losing the cold hard thud of its inanimate materiality. Shelton's piece hangs alongside Evan Holloway's multicolour totem pole of human heads and 16 small works by Harry Dodge, scrappy weapons made from basic household items. Nails are planted into socks, butter tins joined to rusty blades, and broom handles affixed to kitchen knives. These are dirty, guerrilla implements, but there's comedy, innuendo and a certain species of erotica. (Dodge has previously presented some of these objects as amorous gifts to his partner, the writer Maggie Nelson.)

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*The antithesis of Conceptual art, Dodge, Holloway, and Shelton's humorous and odd sculptures emphasize the physical aspects of the creative process. Across a range of materials—from iron and bronze to quotidian found objects—these three American artists make the viewer acutely aware of how one's body shares the exhibition space with the sculpture.*

**Harry Dodge, Evan Holloway, Peter Shelton Triples**

May 27 - Jul 3, 2016

**The Approach**

1st Floor, 47 Approach Road / +442089833878 / [theapproach.co.uk](http://theapproach.co.uk)

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PRESS RELEASE



## **Triples: Harry Dodge, Evan Holloway, Peter Shelton**

28th May 2016 - 3rd July 2016  
The approach, London

Proposed by Evan Holloway

In an age when the virtual is often privileged over the actual, the works by Harry Dodge (b. 1966), Evan Holloway (b. 1967) and Peter Shelton (b. 1951) make a case for the delight in object-making as opposed to conceptual and de-materialised art. Since the 1990s, Holloway has advocated for an “analogue counter-revolution” through his commitment to the material experience of objects as the primary site of art practice. The physical object stubbornly occupies space and can only be experienced by proximity. Although the three artists emerged from slightly different worlds at different times, their practice shares the importance of building a corporeal relationship between the artwork and the viewer. This space becomes a site for engaging ideas about time passing, being physically human, and the pleasure of experiencing materials holding space.

Shelton’s weighty *Ironlongbag* from the late 1980s is scaled to the body and made manifest by the visitor’s motion in space, in what the artist calls a “tight-fitting architecture.” The work occupies a realm between abstraction and figuration; where it functions not as a depiction, but clearly speaks to bodily empathies. *Ironlongbag* recalls art historian Briony Fer’s description of Eva Hesse’s visceral works, where an abstract semisphere, albeit a material substitution, is more like a breast than a picture of a breast could ever be. The *Ironlongbag*, a soft vessel or a solid organ, resembles the body not in an anthropomorphic way, but in how it occupies space with the mass and weight of its voluptuous form. The work presents a juxtaposition between the physical weight of the bodily form and the existential lightness of what it means to be a body.

The metal joint of Holloway’s *Faces* (described by the artist as an elbow), functions not only as a support for the plaster appendages, but recognises the human body as a set of possibilities for the engineering of sculptures. As in Shelton’s work, the formalist steel structure nods to abstraction, whilst making reference to the human figure. *Wheel* features pigs’ trotters arranged on a set of spokes. Some touch the floor, performing as supports, while others reach out to the viewer as if beckoning or threatening. Reminiscent of the Orwellian metaphor in *Animal Farm*, this work might induce a self-reflexive awareness of our own savage or barbarian animality, even down to our beast-like appendages.

Dodge’s *Emergency Weapons*, made in response to the USA Patriot Act of the early 2000s, appear as desperate, whimsical extensions of the human body. During a short time period, the artist’s daily practice was supplanted by the compulsive construction of an urgent, scrappy armoury. The tool or weapon, as the most archaic form of prosthetics, is a supplement to our hands, allowing them to exceed our corporeal boundaries. In the face of an ever-present politics of fear, Dodge’s weapons offer a combination of wit, paranoia and comic resolve.

Classical sculptural materials such as iron or bronze are juxtaposed with ordinary materials and found objects in this exhibition, where the makeshift meets a polished finish reminiscent of industrial manufacture. Holloway’s sculptures include hand-made plaster faces, pigs feet, and stacks of heads, which are treated like found objects incorporated into formalist structures. Dodge’s weapons were each made in under five minutes and with items found at his house – rusty nails, broom handles, butter tins, paper cups. The resulting contraptions are dirty, brutal, humorous, pathetic and decisive, recalling freakish, beggarly hand-tools.

In both Dodge’s and Holloway’s works, references within and outside the Western art historical canon are at play. The cast aluminium *Head-Stack* is a totem referencing vertical hierarchies, but also a distribution of power through the light traveling up and down the caricature-like bulb noses. Dodge’s tools resemble archaeological findings that could attest to a high level of human advancement, but appear absurdly analogue in light of the threats of the virtual age. Similarly, Shelton’s work evokes archaeology or primitivism: the beginnings of evolution, when beings were barely formed amoebic entities, limbless encased organs.

*Triples* immediately nods to the ‘golden rule of three’ with its inclusion of three artists; but – in a more abstract sense – to illuminate the binary between the virtual and the physical. Importantly, a triple is at once the subject and object, as well as the relationship that exists in the space between those two things. If a triple is always the state of *being*, then one always exists in relation to something else/Other. Similarly, metadata (that is, stored data used to make information findable by algorithmic search functions) is based on ‘triples’, and can be thought of in terms of recognisability: a face, interface, or a kind of metaphorical sociality. *Triples* extends to both the direct relationship between the viewer’s visceral *encounter* with an art object, as well as to the group show scenario, where artists’ works are brought together in a space based on the intuition that they will ‘speak to each other.’

**Harry Dodge** (Born 1966, San Francisco, CA, USA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, USA). Recent exhibitions and screenings include: Kunsthalle Wien, Austria (2016); *The Cybernetic Fold*, WallSpace Gallery, New York, NY (2015); Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA (2015); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2014); KW Institute for Art, Berlin (2014); *Meaty Beauty Big & Bouncy*, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2013); ICA Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA (2013); Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2008).

**Evan Holloway** (Born 1967, Whittier, CA, USA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, USA). Recent exhibitions include: The Geffen Collection, Los Angeles (2016); De La Cruz Collection, Contemporary Art Space, Miami (2015); The Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Herzliya, Israel (2013); *Post-process plunk*, The Approach, London (2012); *American Exuberance*, The Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2011); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2011).

**Peter Shelton** (Born 1951, Troy, OH, USA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, USA). Recent exhibitions include: Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach (2015); *littleBIG*, Jose è Druids Biada Art Gallery, Mount St. Mary’s College, Los Angeles (2014); *Peter Shelton: powerhousefrenchtablenecklaces*, Sperone Westwater, New York (2012); *Peter Shelton*, Portland Art Museum, Portland (2011); Hammer Museum and Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles (2010).

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